

TYCO 17674 (AT 20958-2034)
PATENT**Remarks**

This communication responds to the Office Action dated September 10, 2004, wherein all of the pending claims were rejected as either anticipated by, or unpatentable over, prior art. The claims have been amended to better define the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention, and to patentably distinguish over the cited prior art. Reconsideration of the rejections is respectfully requested in view of the amendments to the claims and the following discussion.

Objection to the Specification

The Examiner has objected to the disclosure as not providing any description or explanation of how the weld or ultrasonic weld can be removable. Applicants concur that there is no description of how the ultrasonic weld can be removable. However, applicants respectfully suggest that the Examiner has misread the claims and/or misstated the objection. The claims recite that connector housings are removably connected to each other by ultrasonic welds, and that the connector housings can be separated from each other by breaking the ultrasonic welds. Thus, it is not the ultrasonic welds that are removable, but instead the connector housings that are removable from each other by breaking the ultrasonic welds between the connector housings. A description of the removably connected housings joined by ultrasonic welds, and breaking of the ultrasonic welds, is found at least in paragraphs [35], [36] and [37] of the original disclosure. Therefore, applicants submit that the disclosure adequately describes the invention as defined in the claims, and the Examiner is requested to withdraw the objection.

Claim Rejections

Claims 15, 23-24, 34 and 36-39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Czaja (U.S. Patent No. 4,717,360); claims 19-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Czaja; and claims 16-17, 26, 30-33 and 40-42 stand rejected under U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Czaja in view of Nielsen (U.S. Patent No. 4,973,263).

As amended, all of the independent claims include limitations directed to connector housings that are removably connected to each other by ultrasonic welds, and the connector

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housings are separable from each other by breaking the ultrasonic welds to form individual connector units.

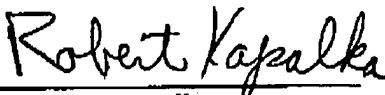
Czaja discloses a plurality of connector housings that are molded together as a multi-connector assembly. Break-away walls between the connector housings permit individual connectors to be separated from the assembly. Czaja does not disclose ultrasonic welds between the connector housings.

The Examiner relies on Nielsen for disclosing the use of ultrasonic weld to connect different connector parts. However, Nielsen is concerned with providing a permanent electrical splice that seals the electrical connections within the splice from moisture and other contaminants found in an outdoor environment (column 2, lines 62-66). In order to provide a permanent splice, Nielsen discloses an assembly including a cover 36 that is ultrasonically bonded to a housing 22, thereby forming an interior chamber 50 (column 5, lines 56-64). Thus, Nielsen uses ultrasonic welding to provide a permanent sealed connection between the housing and the cover. Nielsen does not disclose or suggest that the ultrasonic weld can be broken, and there is no teaching or suggestion in the cited prior art which would lead a person of ordinary skill to modify Czaja by replacing the break-away walls with ultrasonic welds.

Therefore, applicants submit that the claims as amended are allowable over the cited prior art.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, and allowance of the claims, are respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,


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